

1559th meeting, 6 May 2026

2.1 The Council of Europe and the conflict in Georgia

Reference documents

CM/Del/Dec(2025)1527/2.1, CM/Del/Dec(2025)1543/2.1, SG/Inf(2026)13

Decisions

The Deputies

1. recalled their decisions on “The Council of Europe and the conflict in Georgia” of 29, 30 April and 2 May 2014 (1198th meeting), 12 May 2015 (1227th meeting), 4 May 2016 (1255th meeting), 3 May 2017 (1285th meeting), 2 May 2018 (1315th meeting), 2 May 2019 (1345th meeting), 21 October 2020 (1386th meeting), 12 and 17 May 2021 (1404th meeting), 4 May 2022 (1433rd meeting), 31 October 2023 (1479th meeting), 7 May 2024 (1498th meeting) and 30 April 2025 (1527th meeting);
2. welcomed the Reykjavík Declaration, adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which calls, collectively, on the Russian Federation to comply with its international obligations and to immediately withdraw completely and unconditionally its forces from Georgia and reasserts the Council of Europe member States’ unwavering support for Georgia’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognised borders;
3. reiterated the unequivocal support of the Council of Europe member States for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders;
4. stated that, more than 17 years after the armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia, the Russian Federation continues to impede the peaceful conflict resolution process and to undermine the security and stability in the wider region, through its effective control and continuing illegal military presence in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, increased military exercises and infrastructure reinforcements, including positions and fences being established in the Chorchana/Tsnelisi and other areas; the steps towards *de facto* annexation of Georgia’s Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, including through the implementation of the so-called “treaties on alliance and strategic partnership/integration”, the incorporation of the illegal military units of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia of Georgia into the armed forces of the Russian Federation, the creation of a so-called “joint group of armed forces” in the Abkhazia region, the establishment of so-called “joint information and co-ordination centres of law enforcement agencies”, the functioning of so-called “customs points” in both Georgian regions aimed at the integration of these regions respectively into the customs sphere of the Russian Federation, the adoption of the so-called “programme on the creation of a common socio-economic space between Russia and the Georgian region of Abkhazia”, the signing of the so-called “agreements on dual citizenship with the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia”, the ratification of the so-called agreement on the transferring of the Bichvinta resort in the Abkhazia region of Georgia to the Russian Federation; the steps towards the deployment of a permanent naval base in Ochamchire, in the Abkhazia region; the transfer of Sokhumi airport to Russia for reconstruction and its recent operationalisation and the launch of flights between Moscow and Sokhumi; statements about the intention to hold a so-called “referendum” in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia of Georgia on the matter of joining the Russian Federation, the regular illegally opened election polling stations and illegal so-called “elections” in both regions, including illegal so-called parliamentary elections conducted in the Tskhinvali region in 9 June 2024 and the so-called presidential elections conducted in the Abkhazia region in February and March 2025; reiterated that any illegal acts by the Russian Federation aimed at changing the status of the Georgian regions, including through issuing Russian passports and so-called “residents’ permits”, thus

establishing a so-called “status of foreign residents”, have no legal effect and further aggravate the situation on the ground; expressed concern over hampering the activities of international organisations operating on the ground and restricting the confidence-building efforts; called upon the Russian Federation to stop and reverse this illegal process and to comply with its international obligations and commitments, including under the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement, in particular with regard to the withdrawal of the military and security forces from the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, and allowing the establishment of international security mechanisms on the ground, as well as the dignified return of Georgian IDPs and refugees;

5. welcomed the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Georgia v. Russia (II)* that established the responsibility of the Russian Federation for grave human rights violations during the period of occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia following the August 2008 war, as the State exercising effective control over those regions, including the killing, torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention of Georgian civilians and military personnel; the looting and burning of Georgian homes; the inhuman treatment of Georgians targeted as an ethnic group; the deprivation of the right of IDPs and refugees to return to their homes;

- welcomed the conclusion of the investigation phase in the Situation in Georgia by the International Criminal Court in 2022 that issued arrest warrants for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against “ethnic Georgian civilians in the context of an occupation by the Russian Federation”, and uncovered the alleged role of Russian military officials;

- welcomed the judgment of 7 March 2023 of the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Mamasakhlisi and Others v. Georgia and Russia*, which once again confirmed the effective control of the Russian Federation over Abkhazia (Georgia) before the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and its responsibility for human rights violations in the region;

- welcomed the judgment of 28 April 2023 of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Georgia v. Russia (II)*, which ordered the Russian Federation to pay up to 130 million euros in favour of up to 24 000 Georgian citizens affected during the August 2008 armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia;

- welcomed the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 19 December 2023 in the case *Matkava and Others v. Russia*, that confirmed the responsibility of the Russian Federation over the violation of the right to life of Georgian citizen Giga Otkhozoria, killed on 19 May 2016, and another judgment of the ECHR of 19 December 2023, that affirmed Russia's responsibility for the unlawful detention of Georgian citizens in the Georgian region of Abkhazia;

- welcomed the judgment of 9 April 2024 of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Georgia v. Russia (IV)*, which unanimously confirmed multiple violations of the European Convention caused by the unlawful “borderisation” by Russia, including: the right to life, the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to liberty and security, the right to respect for private and family life, protection of property, the right to education and the right to freedom of movement, considering all the restrictions unlawful and establishing Russia's responsibility for all those violations;

- welcomed the judgment of 14 October 2025 of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Georgia v. Russia (IV)*, which ordered the Russian Federation to pay up to 253 million euros in favour of over 29 000 victims for a pattern of human rights violations in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia;

- welcomed the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 17 December 2024 in the case of *Taganova and Others v. Georgia and Russia*, which once again confirmed the effective control of the Russian Federation over the Abkhazia region and held Russia fully responsible for human rights violations, in particular for violation of property rights in Abkhazia region;

6. stated that Georgia, as the only sovereign State under international law over its regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, is still prevented from exercising its legitimate jurisdiction over these regions due to Russia's effective control over the Georgian regions and the continuous impediments put up by the Russian Federation, including the latter's continuing military presence therein;

7. deeply regretted that, despite constant calls upon the Russian Federation to reverse this process, it continues to install razor and barbed wire fences and other artificial obstacles along the dividing line, separate families and communities, violate human rights and fundamental freedoms and impede the settlement of the conflict;
8. expressed grave concern about limitations in crossing opportunities at “crossing points” in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, which led to severe humanitarian consequences for the local population;
9. expressed further profound concern that the human rights situation in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia has been further deteriorating, including concerns with regard to violations of the right to life, the right to freedom of movement, the right to health, the right to property, the right to education in the native language and the right to liberty and security;
10. expressed grave concern over impunity concerning the deaths of ethnic Georgians David Basharuli, Giga Otkhozoria, Archil Tatunashvili, Tamaz Ginturi and Vitali (Temur) Karbaia, as well as the death of Irakli Kvaratskhelia in the Russian military base in the Abkhazia region of Georgia;
11. recalled the “Otkhozaria-Tatunashvili List” adopted by the Parliament of Georgia, and the national restrictive measures decided on by the Georgian Government against those responsible for grave human rights abuses in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia;
12. expressed particular concern over the continued discrimination of Georgians on the grounds of ethnicity in both Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, particularly in the Gali and Akhagori districts, through further restrictions to the freedom of movement, residence rights, the right to work and property rights in cases of forced registration as foreign residents or demands to change surnames and ethnic identity, as well as the restriction of their right to education in the native language and preventing their access to religious sites or graveyards and grazing and farming lands;
13. expressed grave concern over the tightening of so-called legislation in the Abkhazia region of Georgia, which further restricts inheritance and bequest rights in respect of real estate, including by prohibiting such rights not only for those Georgians and their family members who fought or in any way assisted the Georgian army during the 1992-1993 conflict, but also for those whose family members are considered to have acted or made statements against the so-called “sovereignty of Abkhazia”;
14. expressed deep concern over the demolition of the homes of Georgian IDPs in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, in violation of the property rights of IDPs;
15. expressed deep concern over the obliteration and alteration of Georgian features from the Georgian cultural heritage monuments in both regions;
16. expressed serious concern that IDPs and refugees continue to be deprived of their fundamental right to voluntary return to their places of origin in a safe and dignified manner;
17. expressed grave concern over the continued arbitrary detentions of local inhabitants along the dividing line. These arbitrary detentions have become lengthier and increasingly involve members of the vulnerable groups;
18. expressed grave concern over the illegal detentions of Georgian citizens, among others – Kristine Takalandze and Giorgi Mosiashvili, as well as Irakli Bebuia, who was released only after serving his illegal full sentence imposed by the occupation regime despite suffering from severe health conditions. Expressed deep concern that in some cases these detentions have resulted in fatal outcomes such as the case of Genadi Bestaev;
19. strongly condemned a decision in the region of Abkhazia that provides for the death penalty, under certain circumstances, in cases of the so-called “export, import and/or transit of drugs”;

20. expressed the importance of the continuation and effective functioning of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) – the only negotiations format with the Russian Federation, launched on the basis of the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement, in order to achieve progress on key issues such as the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the return of IDPs and refugees, as well as security and humanitarian challenges stemming from the unresolved conflict between Russia and Georgia;

21. expressed concern about the suspension of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) in Gali since June 2018; welcomed the regular meetings of the Ergneti IPRM and underlined the necessity to immediately and unconditionally resume the Gali IPRM and ensure the proper functioning of both IPRMs, in full respect of the founding principles;

22. expressed support for Georgia's firm commitment to promote reconciliation and engagement between the divided communities, including the peace initiative of the Government of Georgia entitled "A Step to a Better Future", as well as the programme "Peace Fund for a Better Future";

23. bearing in mind that human rights and fundamental freedoms shall be protected by all relevant States Parties to the European Convention on Human Rights in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, reiterated their call to the Russian Federation as the State exercising effective control:

- to create conditions for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of all IDPs and refugees;
- to cease any form of ethnic discrimination towards the residents of the Georgian regions, first and foremost, the ethnic discriminatory measures against the Georgian population, including demands to register as foreign residents or to change their surnames in order to be granted access to full civil rights;
- to remove any obstacles to ending impunity in cases concerning the murder of ethnic Georgians in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and to bringing the perpetrators to justice;
- to immediately cease policies leading to human rights violations in both regions of Georgia;
- to remove any impediment, restriction or limitation to the right to freedom of movement across the dividing line, including for medical and educational purposes; to cease the denial and/or delay of medical evacuations;
- to cease arbitrary detentions of persons, including in the context of so-called "illegal border crossings" and to re-open "crossing points";
- to immediately release Kristine Takalandze, Shalva Khizanishvili and all other illegal detainees;
- to cease violations of the right to education in schools and preschools, including education in the native Georgian language, in both Georgian regions;
- to prevent further deterioration of monuments belonging to the cultural heritage throughout Georgia's regions;

24. called on the Russian Federation to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as to co-operate with the International Criminal Court;

25. deeply regretted that neither the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe monitoring bodies, nor the Secretariat delegation preparing the Secretary General's consolidated reports, have been granted access to the Georgian regions concerned; invited the Secretary General to engage in a dialogue with the Russian Federation and Georgia to this end; called on the Russian Federation to secure the immediate and unrestricted access of the Council of Europe bodies to the Georgian regions;

26. encouraged the Commissioner for Human Rights, with full respect of his independence, to follow the deteriorating human rights situation in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia in the way he deems appropriate, in accordance with his mandate;

27. encouraged the Secretary General to continue the submission of the biannual consolidated reports on the conflict in Georgia to the Committee of Ministers.