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PRESS RELEASE

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PRESS STATEMENT - TAGILONI INCIDENT

Following an incident reported by the Chief Georgian Military Observer, regarding the alleged maltreatment of locals and rape of women by four uniformed Abkhaz personnel from Tagiloni Taxation Post on 5 / 6 September, a UNOMIG patrol was launched on 07 September 2003, to carry out a preliminary investigation of the incident. According to information collected by the patrol, there was evidence of the beating of locals by four to six armed persons in uniform; however, the rape of women could not be confirmed and neither did any local report it to the patrol.

Considering the seriousness of the allegation and possible effects on the overall situation, the UNOMIG Chief Military Observer launched a *Joint Fact Finding Group (JFFG) investigation to establish the facts of the incident. On 10 September, the JFFG, comprising representatives of the Georgian and the Abkhazian sides, CISPKF and UNOMIG, visited the incident site in Tagiloni Village. After interviewing a number of local people, the JFFG jointly established that there was no evidence that any women in Tagiloni Village had been raped during the incident. However, it was confirmed that a number of local men had been beaten by as yet unidentified armed uniformed men.

The case will be discussed during the regular Quadripartite Meeting on Thursday 11th of September 2003.

*JFFG

The JFFG, constituting representatives of the parties in conflict, UNOMIG and CIS PKF, was established on 19 Jan 2000. The JFFG is charged with investigating the facts of incidents relating to 'violations of the Moscow agreement of 1994, acts of sabotage and terrorism and politically motivated illegal acts directed against the civilian population, and of statements regarding the preparations for such acts and actions'.

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