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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**JOINT UNOMIG/CIS PKF PATROL TO THE KODORI VALLEY**

A joint UNOMIG/CIS PKF patrol visited the Lower and Upper Kodori Valley from 16-18 July. In the Upper Kodori Valley the joint patrol visited the villages of Chkhalta, Ajara, Gentsvish, Saken and Omarishara. The UNOMIG Chief Military Observer, Major-General Kazi Ashfaq Ahmed, accompanied the joint patrol which consisted of 5 UNOMIG military observers and 5 CIS PKF personnel.

The patrol undertook the following tasks:

Observation of the general and military situation in the Lower and Upper Kodori;  
Monitoring and verifying the withdrawal of the Georgian forces from the Upper Kodori Valley; and  
Building up confidence with the local population.

In the Upper Kodori Valley, the patrol did not find evidence of the presence of regular Georgian Ministry of Defense troops. Several border guard posts were visited in the Upper Kodori Valley and the patrol noted some decrease in the number of border guards.

The population welcomed regular patrolling by UNOMIG in the area as they considered it to be a guarantee of stability.

In the lower part of the Kodori Valley Abkhaz units were met and only routine duties were observed.

The joint UNOMIG/CIS PKF patrol greatly appreciated the support and assistance provided by the respected authorities, which enabled the patrol to successfully fulfil its tasks. In general, the joint UNOMIG/CIS PKF patrol found the situation in the Kodori to be calm.

This was the seventh joint UNOMIG/CIS PKF ground patrol to the Upper Kodori since such patrols resumed on 25 March 2002.

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