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JOINT UNOMIG/CIS PKF PATROL TO THE KODORI VALLEY

A joint UNOMIG/CIS PKF patrol took place to the Kodori Valley on 16-18 May 2002. The joint patrol, comprising 6 UNOMIG military observers and 5 CIS PKF soldiers, visited Cebelda, Lata, Upper Lata, Chkhalta, and Asgara.

The patrol undertook the following tasks:

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

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 and quiet.

In the Upper Kodori Valley, the patrol met with Rezo Kortzaya, head of administration for the region, as well as with Mr. Paata Devdariani, the governor's representative for matters relating to armed units in the Upper Kodori Valley. At Chkhalta the joint UNOMIG/CIS PKF patrol met with Major David Kolbaia of the Georgian Border Guards in the Upper Kodori Valley. During the last patrol from 3-5 May the patrol had observed three 82 mm mortars and about 140 boxes of ammunition in Chkhalta, and during the current patrolling the military equipment had still not been removed. The Georgian side has stated the hardware is to be removed once the Khida Pass opens.

In the Upper Kodori Valley, the patrol did not find evidence of the presence of regular Georgian Ministry of Defense troops.

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

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