



**UNITED NATIONS**      **NATIONS UNIES**  
**United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia**

**For Immediate Release**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**UNOMIG HELICOPTER SHOOTDOWN**

The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) mourns the loss of 9 of its staff members, who were killed in action while serving the cause of peace in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia.

The barbaric act of shooting down a UN helicopter with unarmed military observers on board regrettably marks a new phase in the degradation of the conflict. In their neglect of continuing substantive work within the Geneva peace process mechanisms, both the Georgian and Abkhaz sides bear responsibility for this situation, which created conditions in which it was possible to commit such a brutal act.

At the same time, the tragic incident of 8 October serves as an occasion to remind both sides of their commitment to safeguard the security of UN personnel at all times, and to appeal to them to keep this commitment on the top of their priorities. Neither side had warned UNOMIG of the danger in overflying parts of the Kodori Valley on the day of the attack.

The UN will not take part in attributing the blame as long as the circumstances of the shoot down have not been clarified in greater detail. To this effect, UN Headquarters will dispatch an expert team charged with conducting a thorough investigation into the crash.

The UN considers it imperative that the perpetrators of this cruel act be brought to justice.

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