



**For Immediate Release**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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Over the last several days Abkhaz and Georgian media reports have respectively claimed that a concentration of armed personnel and military hardware was taking place in the zone of conflict on the opposite side of the ceasefire line as well as in the Kodori Valley. These reports have prompted official statements both in Sukhumi and Tbilisi. In response to the developing situation, UNOMIG intensified its monitoring in all areas concerned but did not observe anything to substantiate reports of a build-up of forces on either side. The only sizable movement of armed personnel through the security zone observed by UNOMIG's military observers was a notified in advance rotation of Georgian MIA personnel to and from upper Kodori valley in the period 16 - 19 April. The Abkhaz side has been informed about this rotation by UNOMIG on 17 April.

The media reports and the official statements have led to an increase in tensions and the possibility of a serious incident and/or direct confrontation between the sides. The reported shooting down of an unmanned aerial vehicle in the zone of conflict on 20 April is a case in point.

In its recent resolution 1808 of 15 April 2008 the United Nations' Security Council "strongly urge[d] all parties to consider and address seriously each other's legitimate security concerns, to refrain from any acts of violence or provocation, including political action or rhetoric, to comply fully with previous agreements regarding ceasefire and non-use of violence, and to maintain the security zone and the restricted weapons zone free of any unauthorized military activities".

For its part, UNOMIG will continue to conduct focused monitoring in order to address the concerns of the sides. The Mission urges both sides to exercise restraint and to refrain from actions which could risk escalating the already tense situation. UNOMIG also encourages the sides to engage seriously in dialogue on security matters as soon as possible.

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For more information, please contact:

UNOMIG Public Information Office

**Tel:** +995 32 926 700  
**Fax:** +995 32 926 707

**E-mail:** [unomig-pio@un.org](mailto:unomig-pio@un.org)  
**Web site:** [www.unomig.org](http://www.unomig.org)